PREFACE

THIS LITTLE book deals with a topic to which many others have been devoted. It differs from the great majority of these in that, whereas each of them presents some one theory or hypothesis which the author believes to be the solution of the riddle of life, and seeks to persuade the reader of its truth, I have no such hypothesis.

In my mind the whole problem seems much too difficult and complex for any such treatment.

What I have attempted is to make the reader aware of the difficulty and complexity of the problem, and of the very great variety of views entertained by philosophers and men of science; and this I have sought to achieve by writing very brief and concise expositions of the many views which seem to me deserving of serious con-

sideration. I have not, of course, attempted to. present precisely the view of each individual author. Rather I have selected the views of certain authors whom I take to be representative of groups whose members have propounded closely allied views. Yet, although. I have: no one •. hypothesis to defend, I have not devoted more than forty years to biological studies without having arrived at some convictions. And of all such convictions, the most important from